LP
F5012
1812
U54

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2012 with funding from
Queen's University - University of Toronto Libraries

http://archive.org/details/messageprestrans00unit

MESSAGE

FROM THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

TRANSMITTING

COPIES OF A CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN

MR. MONROE AND MR. FOSTER,

RELATING TO THE

ALLEGED ENCOURAGEMENT

BY

THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT

OF THE

INDIANS TO COMMIT DEPREDATIONS

ON THE

INHABITANTS OF THE UNITED STATES;

AND TO

A SEAMAN CLAIMED

BY THE

BRITISH GOVERNMENT.

JUNE 11, 1812.

Read and ordered to lie on the table.

WASHINGTON:

A. AND G. WAY, PRINTERS.

1812.

F5012
1812
U 54

MESSAGE.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States.

I transmit, for the information of congress, copies of letters which have passed between the secretary of state and the envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary of Great Britain.

JAMES MADISON.

June 11, 1812.

CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN

MR. MONROE AND MR. FOSTER,

BELATIVE TO

INDIAN HOSTILITIES.

Mr. Foster to Mr. Monroe.

WASHINGTON, June 7, 1812.

SIR,

IT is extremely painful to me to find that, notwithstanding the assurances which I had the honor to make to you on the authority of communications from his majesty's captain general in Canada, that his majesty's officers had not only had no hand in urging the Indian tribes to the late atrocities committed on the frontiers of the United States, but had even endeavored, in the true spirit of friendly neighbourhood, to restrain them as far as lay in their power; such reports still continue to be circulated with revived industry, and have, in a great degree, even been countenanced by statements which were recently made in an address from a governor of one of the United States, to the citizens of that state.

To set this question at rest, I beg leave, sir, to transmit to you the inclosed copies of a letter from the late governor of Canada to his majesty's secretary of state for the war department, and the answer of lord Liverpool, which have been recently received by me, through lord Castlereagh's office, and from which you will perceive that his majesty's ministers had not only expressed their decided approbation of the conduct of the government of Canada, in using whatever influence they might possess over the Indians, to dissuade them from committing hostilities on the ci-

tizens of the United States, but also had especially directed that those exertions should be continued.

While I assure you, sir, very frankly, that I do not believe such evidence was necessary to convince the American government of the erroneous nature of the abovementioned reports, I yet beg leave to request that this letter and its inclosures may as early as possible be laid before the president.

I also beg leave to add, that it is really a serious inconvenience thus to find it necessary continually to furnish fresh evidence, in order to oppose rumours which, though unsupported by the shadow of a document or any other authority whatever than mere hearsay, do yet derive a consequence from the circulation given to them under the official sanction of a state government.

I have thought it necessary to be thus explicit on this subject, on account of the odious nature of the reports in question: dreadful and horrible as they are, they would at any time suffice to excite the most violent irritation through a country, but they surely ought not to be made use of without the most clear and convincing proofs to constitute their veracity.

I have the honor, &c. &c.

(Signed) AUG. J. FOSTER.

The hon. James Monroe, &c. &c. &c.

Copy of a letter from J. H. Craig to the earl of Liverpool.

QUEBEC, March 29, 1811.

MY LORD,

Under the present circumstances existing between his majesty's government and that of the American states, I feel it to be necessary to forward to your lordship, the information that is contained in the inclosed letter and papers from lieutenant governor

Gore, to which I add a copy of my answer to him on the subject. This is the first direct communication that I have had either from lieutenant governor Gore, or from any officer of the Indian department, relative to the intentions of the Indians. My private accounts, however, which, though not official, were equally to be relied on, gave me assurances of their determination to have recourse to arms, so long ago as in November; and in my wish to assist in saving the American frontier from the horrors usually attending the first burst of an Indian war, by enabling them to take precautions against it, I communicated my accounts to Mr. Morier, and though I thought that on official communication might be extremely objectionable, I gave him, however, permission, if he did not think it improper from any circumstance of situation in which he might find himself with them, verbally to convey the information to the American government. And I have since heard from Mr. Morier that he did so. In January, I repeated to Mr. Morier that I continued to receive a confirmation of the intelligence I had before sent him, but I do not know whether he made any farther communication to the American government.

I have the honor to be, &c &c.

(Signed) J. H. CRAIG.

Copy of a letter from Lord Liverpool to the officer administering the government of Lower Canada.

DOWNING STREET,

July 28, 1811.

SIR,

In reference to the despatches Nos. 37 and 39, of lieutenant governor sir James Craig, with their

respective inclosures, on the subject of the hostile intentions which have been manifested by the Indians against the Americans, and of the measures which had been taken by that officer to dissuade them from a recourse to arms, I am commanded by his royal highness the prince regent, to acquaint you that the conduct of sir James Craig, in this respect, has received his royal highness' entire approbation, and I am to desire that you will persevere in the attempt made by him to restrain the Indians from the commission of any act of hostility on the American frontier.

I have the honor to be, &c. &c.

(Signed) LIVERPOOL.

Mr. Foster to the Secretary of State.

WASHINGTON, June 8, 1812.

SIR,

Since I had the honor of writing to you yesterday I have received some additional papers relating to the subject mentioned in my letter, which I transmit to you inclosed. They consist of a letter from sir James Craig to lord Liverpool, inclosing the extract of a letter from lieutenant governor Gore, and of the instructions which he had given to the deputy superintendent of Indian affairs to exert himself in restraining the Indians from committing any act of hostility against the citizens of the United States.

Allow me, sir, to request that these papers may without loss of time be communicated to the president.

I have the honor, &c.

(Signed) AUG. J. FOSTER.

The honorable James Monroe, &c. &c. &c.

QUEBEC, 21st May, 1811.

MY LORD,

In a despatch, No. 37, I thought it right to apprize your lordship of the appearance of hostile intentions towards the Americans, which had shewn itself among the Indians in the upper country, as well as of the steps I had taken on the occasion.

In pursuing the same subject, I have now the honor to inclose copies of the letter I have received from lieutenant governor Gore, and of the instructions, which, in consequence of mine to him, he had given to the deputy superintendent of Indian affairs.

I have the honor to be, &c.

(Signed) J. H. CRAIG.

The Earl of Liverpool, &c. &c.

Extract of a letter from Lieutenant Governor Gore to his Excellency Sir James Craig, dated

"YORK, (Upper Canada,)
March 2, 1811.

"I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your excellency's letter of the 2d of February, which reached me on the 24th.

"I lost no time in directing the deputy superintendent general of Indian affairs to instruct the officers of the Indian department to caution and restrain the Indians from committing any act of hostility on the white inhabitants in the neighbourhood. A copy of my letter to colonel Claus is herewith transmitted."

Extract of a letter from Lieutenant Governor Gore to Colonel Claus, deputy superintendent general of Indian affairs, dated

"YORK PLACE,
February 26, 1811.

"In further notice of Mr. Elliott's letters to you, it is desirable that you should desire him to be more than usually circumspect in his communications with the Indians, so as to leave no possible suspicion of favoring their projected hostilities against the United States of America. You will therefore direct him, as occasion may offer, to impress upon the Indians the certainty of eventual misfortune to themselves from any attack on the whites; to point out to them that the Americans are become so strong that any effort on their part to prevail by arms must be vain, and that it is from such an assurance and out of regard to their safety, comfort and happiness, that their Great Father expressly forbids that any encouragement should be afforded to them in any warlike enterprise."

Mr. Monroe to Mr. Foster.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
June 10, 1812.

SIR,

In answer to the letters of the 7th and 8th instant, which I have had the honor to receive from you, disclaiming any agency of your government in promoting the hostility of the Indians, it is my duty to communicate to you such information as has been transmitted to this government on the subject, at different periods, since the year 1807. From these docu-

ments it appears that whatever may have been the disposition of your government, the conduct of its subordinate agents has tended to excite the hostility of those tribes towards the United States.

In estimating the comparative evidence on this subject, it is impossible not to recollect the communication lately made to this government respecting the conduct of sir James Craig in another important transaction, which it appears was approved by lord Liverpool.

I have the honor to be, &c.

(Signed) JAMES MONROE.

Augustus J. Foster, &c. &c.

Extracts of letters to the Secretary of War.

From Captain Dunham of the United States' Army.

"MICHILIMACKINAC,
May 24, 1807.

"There appears to be a very general and extensive movement among the savages in this quarter. Belts of wampum are rapidly circulating from one tribe to another, and a spirit is prevailing by no means pacific. The inclosed *talk* which has been industriously spread among them needs no comment.

"There is certainly *mischief at the bottom*, and there can be no doubt in my mind that the object and intention of this great Maniton, or second Adam, under the pretence of restoring to the aborigines their former independence, and to the savage character its ancient energies, is in reality to induce a general effort to *rally*, and to strike, somewhere, a desperate blow.

"Extract from a talk delivered at Le Maiouitinong, entrance of Lake Michigan, by the Indian chief Le Maigouis, or the *Trout*, May 4, 1807:

"I am the father of the English, of the French, of the Spaniards and of the Indians. I created the first man, who was the common father of all these people as well as yourselves; and it is through him, whom I have awaked from his long sleep, that I now address you. *But the Americans I did not make; they are not my children, but the children of the Evil Spirit.* They grew from the scum of the great waters when it was troubled by the Evil Spirit, and the froth was driven into the woods by a strong east wind. They are numerous, but I hate them. My children, you must not speak of this talk to the whites; it must be hidden from them. I am now on the earth, sent by the Great Spirit to instruct you. Each village must send me two or more principal chiefs to represent you, that you may be taught. The bearer of this talk will point out to you the path to my wigwam. I could not come myself to Abre Crocte, because the world is changed from what it was. It is broken and leans down, and as it declines, the Chippewas and all beyond will fall off and die; therefore you must come to see me and be instructed. Those villages which do not listen to this talk and send me two deputies, will be cut off from the face of the earth."

From Captain Dunham, of the United States' Army.

"MICHILIMACKINAC,
August 30, 1807.

"The cause of the hostile feelings on the part of the Indians, is principally to be attributed to the influence of foreigners trading in the country."

From Governor William H. Harrison.

"JEFFERSONVILLE, (Falls of Ohio.)
14th April, 1808.

"A young man from the Delaware towns came to inform me that a Pottawattimie Indian had arrived at the towns with a speech from the British, in which they were informed that they (the British) were upon the point of commencing hostilities against the United States, and requesting the Delawares to join them."

From General William Clark.

"ST. LOUIS, April 30, 1809.

"I have the honor to inclose you a copy of a letter which confirms my suspicions of the British interference with our Indian affairs in this country."

[Extract referred to above.]

"I am at present in the fire, receiving Indian news every day. A chief of the Puant nation appears to be employed by the British to get all the nations of Indians to Detroit, to see their fathers, the British, who tell them that they pity them in their situation with the Americans, because the Americans had taken their lands and their game, that they must join and send them off from their lands. They told the savages that the Americans could not give them a blanket nor any thing good for their families.

"They said they had but one father that helped them in their misfortunes, and that they would assemble, defend their father, and keep their lands. It appears that four English subjects have been at Riviere a la Roche this winter, in disguise; they have been there to get the nations together and send them on the American frontiers. The Indians are pushed on by our enemies to take the fort of Belle-vue."

From Samuel Tupper, Indian factor.

"SANDUSKY, 7th June, 1809.

"The conduct of British traders in introducing spirituous liquors among the Indians in this part of the country, and their determined hostility to the measures of our government, have long been subjects of complaint."

From Governor William Hull.

"DETROIT, June 16, 1809.

"The influence of the prophet has been great, and his advice to the Indians injurious to them and the United States. The powerful influence of the British has been exerted in a way alluring to the savage character."

From Governor Harrison.

"VINCENNES, 14th June, 1810.

"An Iowa Indian informs me, that two years ago this summer, an agent from the British arrived at the prophet's town, and in his presence delivered the message with which he was charged: the substance of which was to urge the prophet to unite as many tribes as he could against the United States, but not to commence hostilities until they gave the signal. From this man and others of his nation, I learn that the prophet has been constantly soliciting their own and other tribes of the Mississippi to join him against the United States."

From Governor Harrison.

"VINCENNES, July 18, 1810.

"A considerable number of Sacs went some time since to see the British superintendent, and on the 1st instant fifty more passed Chicago for the same destination.

A Miami chief who has just returned from his annual visit to Malden, after having received the accustomed donation of goods, was thus addressed by the British agent: "My son, keep your eyes fixed on me; my tomahawk is now up; be you ready, but do not strike until I give the signal."

From General William Clark.

"ST. LOUIS, July 20, 1810.

"One hundred and fifty Sacs are on a visit to the British agent, by invitation, and a smaller party on a visit to the island of St. Joseph, in Lake Huron."

From Governor W. H. Harrison.

"VINCENNES, July 25, 1810.

"There can be no doubt of the designs of the prophet and the British agent of Indian affairs, to do us injury. This agent is a refugee from the neighborhood of ————, and his implacable hatred to his native country prompted him to take part with the Indians in the battle between them and General Wayne's army. He has, ever since his appointment to the principal agency, used his utmost endeavors to excite hostilities, and the lavish manner in which he is al-

lowed to scatter presents amongst them, shews that his government participates in his enmity, and authorizes his measures."

From Governor William Hull.

"DETROIT, July 27, 1810.

"Large bodies of Indians from the westward and southward continue to visit the British post at Amherstburg, and are supplied with provisions, arms, ammunition, &c. Much more attention is paid to them than usual."

Extract from the speech of Red Jacket, in behalf of himself and the other deputies of the six nations, February, 1810.

"BROTHER,

"Since you have had some disputes with the British government, their agents in Canada have not only endeavored to make the Indians at the westward your enemies, but they have sent a war belt amongst our warriors to poison their minds, and make them break their faith with you. At the same time we had information that the British had circulated war belts among the western Indians, and within your territory."

From John Johnson, Indian agent.

"FORT WAYNE, Aug. 7, 1810.

"Since writing you on the 25th ultimo, about one hundred men of the Saukies have returned from the

British agent, who supplied them liberally with every thing they stood in want of. The party received 47 rifles, and a number of fusils, with plenty of powder and lead. This is sending firebrands into the Mississippi country, inasmuch as it will draw numbers of our Indians to the British side, in the hope of being treated with the same liberality."

From governor W. H. Harrison.

VINCENNES, Feb. 6, 1811.

"If the intentions of the British government are pacific, the Indian department of Upper Canada have not been made acquainted with them, for they have very lately said every thing to the Indians who have visited them, to excite them against us."

From John Johnston.

FORT WAYNE, Feb. 8, 1811.

"* * * * * has been at this place. The information derived from him is the same I have been in possession of for several years, to wit: the intrigues of the British agents and partizans in creating an influence hostile to our people and government within our territory."

From M. Irwin, Indian Factor.

CHICAGO, May 13, 1811.

"An assemblage of the Indians is to take place on a branch of the Illinois, by the influence of the Prophet: the result will be hostile in the event of a war with Great Britain."

From Governor W. H. Harrison.

VINCENNES, Sep. 17, 1811.

"* * * * * states that almost every Indian from the country above this had been, or were then gone to Malden on a visit to the British agent. We shall probably gain our destined point at the moment of their return. If then the British agents are really endeavouring to instigate the Indians to make war upon us, we shall be in their neighbourhood at the very moment when the impressions which have been made against us are most active in the minds of the savages.

"* * * * * succeeded in getting the chiefs together at Fort Wayne, though he found them all preparing to go to Malden. The result of the council discovered that the whole tribes (including the Weas and Eel rivers, for they are all Miamies) were about equally divided in favor of the Prophet and the United States. Lapoussier, the Wea chief, whom I before mentioned to you as being seduced by the Prophet, was repeatedly asked by * * * * * what land it was that he was determined to defend with his blood; whether it was that which was ceded by the late treaty or not, but he would give no answer.

"* * * * * reports that all the Indians of the Wabash have been, or now are, on a visit to the British agents at Malden. He has never known one fourth as many goods given to the Indians as they are now distributing. He examined the share of one man (not a chief) and found that he had received an elegant rifle, 25 pounds of powder, 50 pounds of lead, 3 blankets, 3 strouds of cloth, 10 shirts and several other articles. He says every Indian is furnished with a gun (either rifle or fusil) and an abundance of ammunition. A trader of this country was lately in the king's stores, at Malden, and was told that the quantity of goods for the Indian department, which had

been sent out this year, exceeded that of common years by 20,000 pounds sterling. It is impossible to ascribe this profusion to any other motive than that of instigating the Indians to take up the tomahawk. It cannot be to secure their trade; for all the peltries collected on the waters of the Wabash in one year, if sold in the London market, would not pay the freight of the goods which have been given to the Indians.

"I am decidedly of opinion that the tendency of the British measures is hostility to us."

From Governor Willie Blount.

NASHVILLE, Sep. 11, 1811.

"There is in this place a very noted chief of the Chickasaws, a man of truth, who wishes the president should be informed that there is a combination of the northern Indians, promoted by the English, to unite in falling on the frontier settlements, and are inviting the southern tribes to join them.

From Governor Ninian Edwards.

Cahokia, St. Clair county,

ILLINOIS TERRITORY,
April 24, 1812.

"The opinion of the celebrated British trader, Dixon, is, that in the event of a British war, all the Indians will be opposed to us, and he hopes to engage them in hostility by making peace between the Sioux and Chipewas, two very large nations, and getting them to declare war against us."

Extract of a letter from his excellency Ninian Edwards, governor of the Illinois territory, to the Secretary of War, dated

ILLINOIS TERRITORY,
January 25, 1812.

"Many of those Indians certainly contemplate joining the British. They are in the habit of visiting fort Malden annually; and as soon as they are prepared for their departure thither, they will (as I believe they have already declared) make inroads upon our settlements, as well to take scalps as to steal horses."

Extract of a letter from gen. Wm. Clark to the Secretary of War, dated

St. LOUIS, Feb. 13, 1812.

"If possession was taken of a point about the mouth of Fox River, where it enters into Green Bay, communications would be cut off between the traders and Indians on the Mississippi below Prairie du Chien, and the British trading houses on the Lakes. Smuggling might be prevented through that channel. Mr. Dickson, and those British traders, who are also *agents*, who have smuggled an immense quantity of goods through that channel this year, and now in the Mississippi, could be caught on their return as they go out in the spring. This description of people grasp at every means in their power to wean the affections of the Indians from any thing that is American; having it in their power to make large presents to the Indians, the most of whom are to be bought; and by this means create great difficulty wherever they have an influence."

Extracts of a letter from John Shaw, esq. Indian agent, to the Secretary of War, dated

FORT WAYNE, 3d month 10th, 1812.

"It appears that the hostile disposition of the Indians confederated under the Shawanee Prophet, that so recently manifested itself in the conflict on the Wabash, is not yet changed. By every thing that I am able to learn, they are secretly plotting to strike an effective blow on our frontier; and it is said that they have been this winter invited by the British agent, at fort Malden, to pay him a visit; and I believe it is a fact that a considerable number of them have recently gone to that place with a view of procuring ammunition."

"A speech is also said to have been recently sent to Winnemac, a Pottawattamie chief, from Elliot, the British agent; but to what purpose I have not yet been able to learn."

Extracts of a letter from John Shaw, esq. Indian agent, to the Secretary of War, dated

FORT WAYNE, 3d month 1st, 1812.

"It has been reported by a Miami Indian who was hunting a few miles from this, that twenty-four Indians of the Shawanee Prophet's band, composed of Winabagoes, Kickapoos and Shawanees, passed his camp about six days ago, on their way to Sandusky, for a quantity of powder and lead, which they said was to be sent them from Canada."

"It also appears from the statements of a gentleman from Detroit, that the Morpock, *(Pottawatamie chief)* with a small party of Indians, has been for a

considerable time past, encamped on the river Raisin, and constantly getting provisions from the British at fort Malden, and that it is firmly believed that he is waiting for a signal from Elliot, the British agent, to commence hostilities on our frontier."

Extracts of a letter from Robert Forsyth, esq. to Capt. Rhea, commanding at Fort Wayne, dated

"FORT WAYNE,
March 10, 1812.

"I have no doubt but those Indians that passed this post some time ago, are a deputation sent to the British garrison for the purpose of procuring ammunition."

"The Manpock, a Pottawattamie chief, has wintered at river Huron, about twenty miles from the garrison of Amhurstburg, and has drawn provisions and ammunition during the whole winter. He has about twenty men with him."

Extract of a letter from B. F. Stickney, esq. Indian agent, to his excellency W. H. Harrison, dated

FORT WAYNE,
April 18, 1812.

"Mr. Shaw has informed you that twenty-four of the Prophet's band had passed this place in the last of February, for fort Malden, to receive ammunition which was promised to be ready for them. They returned on the 4th instant, with as much gun powder, lead and new fusils as they could carry."

DOCUMENTS
RELATIVE TO
A SEAMAN CLAIMED
BY THE
BRITISH GOVERNMENT.

Mr. Monroe to Mr. Foster.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
June 10, 1812.

SIR,

I have the honor to transmit to you for the information of your government, the inclosed papers (No. 1 and 2) in relation to William Helby, alias William Bowman, a sailor belonging to the United States' sloop of war the Hornet, for whom lord Castlereagh, on the 20th of February, when his lordship supposed that vessel was in a British port, informed Mr. Russell that a writ of habeas corpus would be issued and enforced by the legal authorities of Great Britain.

I have the honor, &c. &c.

JAMES MONROE.

Augustus J. Foster, Esq. &c. &c. &c.

[COPY.]

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
8th June, 1812.

SIR,

Having seen the deposition of Elizabeth E. Bowman, in the case of William Bowman, alias William Helby, alias William Elby, said to have been compelled by force to enter on board the Hornet, I wrote to captain Lawrence, commander of the Hornet, for information on the subject, and have received from him the paper which I have the honor of transmitting herewith.

It can be scarcely necessary for me to remark that neither the laws nor usages of our country would sanction any compulsory means to induce persons to enter the navy of the United States.

I am, with great respect, sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) PAUL HAMILTON.

The honorable the Secretary of State.

[COPY.]

United States' ship Hornet,

NEW YORK, June 2d, 1812.

I DO HEREBY CERTIFY, that in consequence of not being able to get a birth on board a merchant ship, and being absolutely in want of bread, I was induced to enter as a seamen on board the Hornet, and for that purpose repaired to her rendezvous, then open in Philadelphia, and voluntarily entered with lieutenant Cassin, on the 3d July, 1811, to serve the United States of America honestly and faithfully for the term of two years, unless sooner discharged. At the time I shipped, I declare that I was perfectly sober, and that as soon as I had received my three months' advance I went on board the gun boat then laying off the navy yard, for the purpose of receiving the men shipped for the Hornet, accompanied by the officer commanding her and the landlord of the rendezvous; and I solemnly declare that no force whatever was used to compel me to enter the service, or to get me on board the gun boat.

WM. HELBY.

WITNESSES.

JOSEPH SMOOT, midshipman United States' navy.
JACOB M. JACOBS, captain's clerk.

The EDITH *and* LORNE PIERCE
COLLECTION *of* CANADIANA

Queen's University at Kingston

F5312
1912
H5W